

United States Department of Agriculture



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MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 360-5-15

SUBJECT: PER-SAFTY AND HEALTH

Purpose. To provide information on chimney safety as provided by Mark Kulig, District Conservationist, Wabasha Field Office.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2005.

According to the Chimney Safety Institute of America (CSIA) wood burning safety is especially important this heating season. People are burning more wood as an alternative heating source to lower high heating bills. Some homeowners are also removing gas logs so they can burn wood again. It is very critical that assistance of a professional chimney sweep is called for this task, just as they would for service to their wood stove.

Chimney inspections are recommended to help lower the risk of carbon monoxide and fire. The most productive way to go about keeping a safe home while burning wood is to install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. There are also other safety precautions to help keep safe and clean fireplaces and wood stoves:

- ◇ Have chimneys inspected annually, and cleaned as necessary. This helps to reduce the risk of fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ◇ Install a chimney cap to keep debris and animals out of the chimney.
- ◇ Fuel the fire safely. Only use wood that has been dried for a minimum of six months and stored properly.
- ◇ Keep hearth area clear-debris, too close to fireplace or wood stove could easily catch fire.
- ◇ Use a fireplace screen to catch the flyaway sparks that could ignite.
- ◇ Be careful not to overload the fireplace. Add only a few pieces of wood and never burn garbage or glossy paper products.
- ◇ Make sure to check the batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors each month.
- ◇ Supervise children and pets closely around wood stoves and fireplaces.

Keep in mind building too big of a fire may cause more hazard than creating a smaller fire that will heat faster. To read more information on fireplace and wood stove safety visit www.csia.org.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

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